

ADPH urges safety precautions and tetanus prevention in areas affected by flooding

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In the aftermath of flooding conditions in the state, the Alabama Department of Public Health advises citizens and emergency responders involved in cleanup efforts to use safety measures to reduce risk of injury. Part of injury prevention is following recommended precautions as well as being up to date on tetanus vaccination.

Some injury prevention advice from CDC includes staying away from damaged buildings or structures until they have been examined and certified as safe by a building inspector or other government authority. You may want to wait to return to buildings during daylight hours, when it is easier to avoid hazards, particularly if the electricity is off and you have no lights.

- Leave immediately if you hear shifting or unusual noises that signal that the structure may fall or if you smell gas or suspect a leak.
- Use teams of two or more people to move bulky objects. Avoid lifting any material that weighs more than 50 pounds (per person).
- Wear hard hats, goggles, heavy work gloves, and watertight boots with steel toe and insole (not just steel shank) for cleanup work.
- Wear ear plugs or protective headphones to reduce risk from equipment noise.
- Avoid wading in water. Glass, metal fragments, and other debris may be in the water.
- Pace yourself and get help to avoid both physical and emotional exhaustion.

According to experts in disaster response, in most settings, a disaster does not increase the risk for tetanus. However, the risk of tetanus among disaster survivors and emergency responders can best be minimized by following standard immunization recommendations and providing proper wound care.

The Alabama Department of Public Health recommends tetanus vaccination for individuals if it has been more than 10 years since their last booster or if they cannot remember when they received their last booster. Patients can contact their local physician or the health department for advice regarding tetanus boosters. Disaster relief workers and citizens affected by flood waters may visit the local county health department to receive tetanus vaccination without making an appointment.

